

April 2011

ALL HANDS

MAGAZINE OF THE U.S. NAVY



66 **ALIVE DAY**
WOUNDED WARRIORS CELEBRATE LIFE





[On the Front Cover]
Retired HM3 Elmer Dinglasan, a double amputee, prepares his hand-crank bike for the 6th annual Soldier Ride from Miami to Key West, Fla.

Photo by MC2(EXW) Todd Frantom



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[Number 1129]



Operation Tomodachi

With thousands of Japanese citizens confirmed dead, injured or missing, and millions more affected by lack of electricity, water and transportation in demolished cities and towns, the U.S. Navy becomes a first responder after a devastating earthquake and tsunami struck Japan.

Photo by MC2 Devon Dow



The Greening of Guantanamo

After Cuba claimed the U.S. base at Guantanamo Bay was stealing its water in 1964, a steam-powered desalinization plant and power plant were built. During FY10, those water and electricity plants produced more than 3.4 million gallons of water and 350,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per day, keeping Guantanamo Bay self sufficient and energy efficient.

Photo by MC3 Leone Mynes



Fisher House:

A Home Away From Home

Thanks to the generosity of Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher, the Fisher House Foundation continues to provide no-cost, temporary lodging facilities at major military medical centers for family members of injured military members.

Photo by MC1(SW/AW) Andrew Meyers



Earning Your Dolphins

One Point at a Time

A submarine would be nothing without the dedication of the crew aboard. The crew's intense familiarization with submarine systems ensures that all personnel receiving their "Dolphins" know how to operate in high-stress conditions during a damage control mishap or handle any emergency that may arise.

Photo by MC2 Shannon Renfroe



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"Alive Day" Soldier Ride

It's their "alive day," a term used by Soldier Ride participants to describe the moment they almost lost their life. Through the Wounded Warrior Project, wounded warriors get the chance to reclaim their confidence and strength through cycling, and participation in outreach programs like the dolphin encounter.

Photo by MC2(EXW) Todd Frantom

[Next Month]

See how the Navy has slipped the surly bonds of earth for the last 100 years.



Members of the Ceremonial Guard, Washington, D.C., perform at the Lincoln Memorial for a recruiting video to promote honor, courage and commitment in the fleet.
Photo by MC1(SW/AW) Andrew Meyers

Hello, Shipmates!

Our submarine force was established 111 years ago when inventor John Holland sold his newest design of the submersible *Holland VI* to the U.S. Navy, April 11, 1900, for \$150,000. Even though the 64-ton submarine wasn't commissioned as *USS Holland (SS 1)* until October 1900, the world's most technical and most powerful sea service had been born.

The submarine force has constantly evolved during the 11-plus decades since its inception. Whether powered by diesel engines or by nuclear reactors, the fast attacks submarines, ballistic submarines and guided-missile submarines continue to deliver unique value to our nation. With stealth being the key, our submarines bring mobility, persistence, agility and firepower to the battlefield enabling us to execute Chief of Naval Operations' Maritime Strategy in supporting national security interests and Maritime Security Operations.

With 53 fast attack submarines (SSNs) currently in the submarine fleet, both the *Los Angeles*- and *Virginia*-classes have multifaceted missions. They use their stealth, persistence, agility and firepower to deploy and support special force operations (SOF), disrupt and destroy an adversary's military and economic operations at sea, provide early strike from close proximity and ensure undersea superiority.

While the *Los Angeles*-class is the backbone of the submarine force, it is the *Virginia*-class that is the most technologically advanced. It's the first attack submarine designed for battle space dominance across a broad spectrum of regional and littoral missions as well as open-ocean, "blue water" missions. Land, sea and undersea firepower, advanced sensors and other special features enable this class of submarine to execute numerous warfighting tasks simultaneously, including their seven primary missions of anti-submarine warfare; anti-surface ship warfare; strike warfare; mine warfare; SOF support; battle group support; and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR).

There are currently 14 *Ohio*-class *Trident* ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs) in the submarine force arsenal. With each carrying a payload of 24 *Trident* missiles, strategic deterrence is their sole mission, and has been since their inception in 1960. The *Ohio*-class replaced the aging, fleet ballistic missile submarines built at that time and is more capable. Providing the sea-based leg of the triad of U.S. strategic deterrent forces, they carry 50 percent of the total U.S. strategic warheads. The SSBN provides the nation's most survivable and enduring nuclear strike capability. While the SSBNs have no preset targets when they go on patrol, the submarines



are capable of rapidly targeting their missiles should the need arise, using secure and constant at-sea communications links.

The first four *Ohio*-class submarines were converted to guided-missile submarines (SSGN) with an additional capability to transport and support Navy SOF. Their primary missions are land attack and SOF insertion and support. Secondary missions are the traditional attack submarine missions of ISR, battle space preparation and sea control.

But, it is the men and women of our fleet who are our most treasured asset, because without them our submarines would be lifeless and rudderless technical marvels. Our cache of 18,509 officers and enlisted Sailors are the most highly trained, motivated and dedicated professionals. They remain vigilant and able to complete any contingency operation worldwide – ashore or at sea.

In closing, I want to note the historical significance that CY 2010 yielded for the submarine community. There was a cultural change as the smoking lamp was extinguished on all submarines, and the ban on women serving aboard submarines was lifted. We currently have 24 women in the nuclear-training pipeline, and they are scheduled to report to the eight crews aboard *USS Ohio (SSGN 726)*, *USS Georgia (SSGN 729)*, *USS Wyoming (SSBN 742)* and *USS Maine (SSBN 741)* at the conclusion of this year or at the beginning of 2012.

I know the future and the legacy of the submarine force continues. **AH**

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Photo by MC2 Kevin S. O'Brien



Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead, left, Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, and Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James F. Amos sign a memorandum of understanding for tactical air integration.

Service Chiefs Sign MOU to Join Navy, Marine Corps Air Power

The secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) recently met with the chief of naval operations (CNO) and the commandant of the Marine Corps to commit to achieving greater combat capability in naval aviation by signing a Tactical Aviation (TACAIR) Integration Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

“Today we reaffirm the enduring partnership of the Navy and Marine Corps. This MOU ensures that our aircraft apportionment is best suited to meet the needs of both services and fulfill the variety of missions undertaken by both,” said SECNAV Ray Mabus. “Together, the Navy and Marine Corps are stronger than they are alone. And together, they will continue to be the most formidable expeditionary fighting force the world has ever known.”

The joint commitment will bring increased combat capability to the nation for the foreseeable future, while reducing the force structure and the number of aircraft required to source requirements for both the Navy and Marine Corps. It also recognizes the service-unique requirements of the Navy and the Marine Corps.

The MOU establishes a framework under which the Marine Corps will provide five squadrons of F-35C aircraft to carrier air wings. As part of the F-35 transition plan, the Marine Corps will procure 80 F-35Cs and 340 F-35Bs; the Navy will procure 260 F-35Cs.

The MOU also eliminates the need for the Navy to provide an expeditionary F/A-18 squadron as part of the Unit Deployment Program, supporting forward-deployed forces in Japan.

“The Marine Corps’ decision to purchase the F-35C is representative of our commitment to tactical air integration with the Navy,” said Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. James F. Amos. “With this decision, it is important to note that the continued development of F-35B remains the centerpiece of the USMC tactical fixed wing modernization program.”

“This reaffirms the way the Navy and Marine Corps serve the nation over time,” said CNO Adm. Gary Roughead. “This brings a new capability into our forces and provides the nation with greater expeditionary capability.”

Because of the dynamic nature of carrier and expeditionary operations, the MOU will be reviewed every five to seven years to ensure alignment with current missions. Additionally, a TACAIR Integration Team will annually examine current situations and attempt to forecast future requirements to be included in updated MOUs. **AH**

Story by Chinara Lusas, Office of the Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D.C.

Sailors Offered Early Out; Reserve Affiliation

Active duty and Full Time Support (FTS) Sailors who want to pursue Reserve options have a new opportunity to do so with the recently announced Early Career Transition Program (ECTP).

According to NAVADMIN 088/11, Sailors with at least two, but less than 16 years of service are now eligible to transfer into the Selected Reserves (SELRES) through the new program.

“ECTP was created to provide Sailors an early transition opportunity to continue their naval service and pursue educational or personal goals,” said Senior Chief Personnel Specialist (AW) Robert Ferrari, SELRES Enlisted Community Management technical advisor. “The program further allows us to match active component ratings with reserve component (RC) needs.”

ECTP-eligible Sailors can transition into the SELRES on a date prior to their End of Active Obligated Service (EAOS) by submitting their requested date three to 15 months in advance. This differs from the Early Transition Program which allows Sailors to request an early separation up to 12 months prior to their scheduled EAOS. If approved, a Sailor’s career counselor should contact the Career Transition Office (CTO) for transition assistance guidance.

“The CTO will assist Sailors throughout the transition process,” said Cmdr. Dan Harris, CTO director, Navy Personnel Command. “We help them select a Navy Operational Support Center, educate them on RC programs and benefits, complete any required RC documents and bonus paperwork, and more.”

Upon transition, Sailors could be eligible for a host of benefits.

“ECTP Sailors will be eligible for all Reserve benefits and enlistment/affiliation bonuses,” said Harris.

Benefits of Reserve affiliation can include:

- Mobilization deferment. Sailors who transition immediately into the SELRES qualify for a two-year deferment from individual mobilization.
- Affiliation bonus. Sailors could be eligible for an affiliation bonus, however, they will be required to repay any unearned portion of any current active component bonus or incentive.
- Continued exchange and commissary privileges.
- GI Bill benefits.

For more information, read the naval message at the NPC website www.npc.navy.mil. Eligible Reserve bonus ratings are listed in NAVADMIN 294/10. **AH**

Story courtesy of Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.

Sailors Must Verify Their Death Gratuity Beneficiary

Due to a change in the law regarding death gratuity and recent upgrades to the Navy Standard Integrated Personnel System (NSIPS), officials are urging Sailors to verify their designated death gratuity beneficiaries.

“The change in the law allows Sailors to designate their gratuity in 10 percent increments to more than one beneficiary,” said John Courtney, Pay, Personnel and Benefits section head, Bureau of Naval Personnel.

The death gratuity is a benefit paid to eligible beneficiaries of a Sailor who dies while on active duty or while traveling to or from such duty. The total gratuity paid is \$100,000, and Sailors may designate one or more persons to receive it. The amount paid to each beneficiary is specified on their Record of Emergency Data (Page 2) in 10 percent increments. If a Sailor is married, but designates someone other than the spouse to receive the gratuity, the Sailor’s command is required to notify the spouse of the designation in a letter.

“The death gratuity is a different benefit from the Servicemen’s Group Life Insurance (SGLI),” said Courtney. “SGLI is a life insurance benefit and those beneficiaries are annotated when a Sailor fills out form SGLV 8286 upon initial entry and whenever they want to update beneficiary and settlement option designations, and when declining or reducing coverage.”

The ability for Sailors to designate someone other than their next-of-kin on their Record of Emergency Data (Page 2) was announced in NAVADMIN 189/07. A change in the law further modified the death gratuity designation and was outlined in NAVADMIN 134/08.

“All Sailors should access their NSIPS Electronic Service Record and verify their Page 2 data,” said Courtney.

Sailors who need to change their beneficiary data should contact their Command PASS Coordinator (CPC), or servicing personnel office.

For more information, Sailors should contact their CPC, personnel office or visit Navy Personnel Command’s website at www.npc.navy.mil to read the applicable messages.

Story courtesy of Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.

New Performance Evaluation Requirements In Effect as of March 15.

Beginning March 15, Navy performance evaluations and fitness reports must conform to new policies recently announced in NAVADMIN 286/10.

The evaluation form “NAVPERS 1616/27 (Revision Aug. 2010) Evaluation and Counseling Record for E-7 through E-9,” also known as the “CHIEFEVAL,” is not affected by the new requirements and its use will continue as usual.

To more clearly define top-performing Sailors, NAVADMIN 286/10 changed the promotion recommendation rules for E-5 Sailors and aligns them with E-6 Sailors under the same recommendation requirements. For reports dated March 15 and beyond, “Early Promote” and “Must Promote” recommendations combined cannot exceed 60 percent

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Mrs. Angela Mora reviews a Hazmat delivery with BU1 (SCW/FMF) Juan Selvera of Naval Construction Training Center, Port Hueneme, CA.

Naval Training Employee Honored With Safety Award

Angela D. Mora, the civilian assistant safety manager/environmental manager at Naval Education and Training Command (NETC), Pensacola, Fla., recently received the NETC FY10 Individual Safety and Occupational Health Award.

The award recognized Mora’s outstanding contribution to the quality of safety and high-risk training safety programs at Naval Construction Training Center (NAVCONSTRACEN), Port Hueneme, Calif., and throughout NETC’s domain.

“This award is a testament to the individual and collective professionalism of the staff at Naval Construction Training Center, Port Hueneme, and their unwavering commitment to our command safety program,” said Mora. “With their continued support, I will keep striving to maintain the safest possible workplace to benefit our service members in their safety, health, and mission accomplishment.”

Mora overhauled the command’s hazardous materials (HAZMAT) and environmental programs, which reduced chemical hazards introduced to staff and students. She also reduced the number of line items on the authorized user list and improved the HAZMAT communications program.

In addition to the command’s outstanding safety record, her aggressive safety program actively contributed to increased mishap prevention for the general benefit of the Seabee community.

According to Cmdr. Charlie Willmore, commanding officer of NAVCONSTRACEN, “Angela brings professionalism and experience that we need to responsibly manage our hazardous materials and keep improving our culture of safety.”

Her environmental management system (EMS) program has been adopted by and recommended by Naval Base Ventura County as the model to follow when assisting other local commands in the implementation of their EMS programs. **AH**

Story by Steve Vanderwerff, Naval Education and Training Command, Pensacola, Fla.



Sailors assigned to USS *Mason* (DDG 87) heave a refueling hose into place during an underway replenishment with USNS *Patuxent* (T-AO 201).

Bottom left—ABE3 Manata Marlon, assigned to the air department aboard USS *Abraham Lincoln* (CVN 72), cleans an arresting engine gear catapult.

Below—Marines conduct routine maintenance on helicopters assigned to Marine Medium Squadron 163 aboard USS *Boxer* (LHD 4).



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of the ranking group. In addition, “Must Promote” recommendations may increase by one for each “Early Promote” quota not used.

An update to NAVFIT98A — known as “Version 29” — was rolled out to the fleet incorporating the new rules. Work stations on the unclassified Navy/Marine Corps Intranet (NMCI) automatically received this new version. For non-NMCI users, the “Version 29” upgrade is available for download from the Navy Personnel Command (NPC) website.

Service members should verify they are using “Version 29” by checking “About NAVFIT98A” under the help tab in NAVFIT98A, which will display “Version 2.2.0.29.”

“Validating reports with the new NAVFIT98A version will help ensure commands comply with the new promotion recommendation rule and help eliminate common errors in preparing reports,” said Jim Price, director of NPC’s Performance Evaluation Division.

Those with questions or concerns about performance evaluations or fitness reports can contact NPC customer service by calling toll-free (866) 827-5672, DSN 882-5672 or by emailing cscmailbox@navy.mil. **AH**

Story courtesy of Navy Personnel Command, Millington, Tenn.

College Degrees Can Increase Sailors’ Advancement Percentage

Sailors with college degrees can increase their chances for advancement, according to recent data provided by the Navy Advancement Center (NAC).

According to the NAC data on the September 2009 through September 2010 advancement cycles for E-4/E-5/E-6, Sailors with a college degree advanced at a rate that was higher than their counterparts without a degree. For example, on the September 2010 cycle 208 exams, 22.9 percent of Sailors with a degree advanced, while 16.4 percent of Sailors without a degree advanced.

“The September 2008 exam cycle was the introduction of education points into the calculations for the E-4 to E-6 final multiple score (FMS),” said Lt. Cmdr. Jim LeViness, director of the NAC. “This review of the data shows the difference a degree can make, but only if it’s combined with sustained, superior performance and excellent test scores. An important point is that degrees must be verified and recorded properly to earn points.”

Details of the education points process can be found in Naval Administrative Message 301/07. Sailors competing for advancement to pay grades E-4 to E-6 will be awarded two points for an accredited associate degree, and four points for an accredited baccalaureate degree or above. Education points will be awarded for the highest degree held, and will increase the overall FMS points with no reduction in points from other factors.

“According to our data, most of the Sailors with degrees would have advanced even without the education points,” said Master Chief Electrician’s Mate (SS) Jeromie Cook, Naval Education and Training Professional Development and Technology Center command master chief. “Education enables and reinforces the critical thinking skills that make a better Sailor, and a more efficient, more technical future force. Education points help, but a degree alone won’t get you there. Sailors need to remember that the biggest point makers will always be their evaluations and exam score.”

To receive the advancement points for education, Sailors must ensure transcripts with degree information are forwarded directly from

their academic institution to the Virtual Education Center (VEC) at:

Center for Personal and Professional Development
Attn: Virtual Education Center
1905 Regulus Ave., Suite 234
Virginia Beach, VA 23461-2099
Phone: (877) 838-1659

“We’ve always known that education has a positive impact on performance and advancement, but this is the first time we had numbers to validate how much,” said Jennie Humes, deputy director of Voluntary Education (VOLED) for the Navy. “Command leaders should guide Sailors in the attainment of their career goals by ensuring Sailors are aware of available education opportunities, including academic skills courses in addition to degree programs. Developing study habits from earning a degree can also help Sailors in their studying for exams.”

Sailors are also strongly encouraged to verify degrees and see they are documented in their Sailor Marine American Council on Education Registry Transcript (SMART) by visiting <https://smart.navy.mil>.

To allow sufficient time for the VEC to process all documents, transcripts for Sailors competing for advancement for E-4 to E-6 must be received by no later than the first of the month in which their advancement exam occurs.

For more information about the Virtual Education Center and the Navy College Program, visit www.navycollege.navy.mil or www.navy-college.navy.mil/dsp_vec.cfm. **AH**

Story by Ed Barker, Naval Education and Training Command, Pensacola, Fla.

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Operation *Tomodachi*



HT2 Seneca Jernigan (left), and YN3 Steven Tai move pallets of humanitarian assistance supplies across the flight deck of USS *Blue Ridge* (LCC 19) during an underway replenishment in support of earthquake and tsunami relief operations in Japan.



Master Chief David Unnone, command master chief of USS *Blue Ridge* (LCC 19), briefs Sailors about taking on humanitarian assistance supplies in Singapore.



USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76) has been directed to Japan following a 9.0 magnitude earthquake and tsunami to render humanitarian assistance and disaster relief.



AW2 Chris Tautkus, from Simi Valley, Calif., uses a translation card to ask a Japanese man what additional supplies and assistance are needed in his area of Kuro-Soki, Japan.



Sailors move food and water onto an HH-60H *Sea Hawk* assigned to Helicopter Anti-Submarine Squadron 4 aboard USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76) in support of Operation *Tomodachi*.

Early on the morning of March 11, 2011,

a massive 8.9-magnitude earthquake followed by a tsunami wave approximately 30 ft. high, struck the northeastern coast of Honshu, Japan.

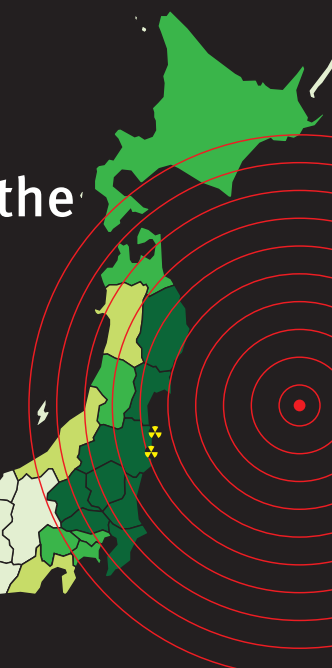
Recorded as the biggest natural disaster in Japan's history, and upgraded to a 9.0 magnitude earthquake by the U.S. Geological Survey, the aftereffects have left thousands of citizens confirmed dead, injured or missing, and millions more affected by lack of electricity, water and transportation, among demolished cities and towns.

According to the Government of Japan's National Police Agency, as of March 14 the earthquake and tsunami resulted in 1,597 deaths, 1,481 missing persons and 1,923 injured people. In addition, the earthquake damaged or destroyed nearly 37,700 buildings throughout northeastern Japan.

In response to the devastation the Japanese people are currently facing, nations have come together to contribute support efforts; including the U.S. Navy, which quickly mobilized resources to support relief efforts.

Almost immediately following the destruction, Navy ships were redirected toward Japan to begin Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief. Ground support was already underway from commands in country. America's Navy immediately committed to Operation *Tomodachi* and provided support to its longtime ally.

Naval assets positioned themselves to provide a range of options to support the Japan Self-Defense Force, which is leading the





An aerial view of damage to Wakuya, Japan, after a 9.0 magnitude earthquake and subsequent tsunami devastated the area in northern Japan.



A fishing boat is among debris in Ofunato, Japan, following a 9.0 magnitude earthquake and subsequent tsunami.



AG2 John Dicola and IS1 Shakir Briggs help a Japanese man remove debris from the Misawa Fishing Port during a volunteer cleanup.



AWC Steven Sinclair is embraced by a Japanese citizen in Wakuys, Japan, after delivering humanitarian supplies in support of Operation *Tomodachi* throughout northern Japan.

disaster relief efforts. Commander, U.S. 7th Fleet provided approximately 12,750 personnel, 20 ships and 140 aircraft for Operation *Tomodachi*.

Navy ships include: USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76), USS *Blue Ridge* (LCC 19), USS *Chancellorsville* (CG 63), USS *Preble* (DDG 88), USS *Essex* (LHD 2), USS *Harpers Ferry* (LSD 49), USS *Germantown* (LSD 42), USS *Tortuga* (LSD 46), USS *John S. McCain* (DDG 56), USS *McCampbell* (DDG 85), USS *Curtis Wilbur* (DDG 54), USS *Fitzgerald* (DDG 62), USS *Mustin* (DDG 89) and USNS *Bridge* (T-AOE 10).

Preble, along with Helicopter Anti-submarine Squadron Light (HSL) 43, were among first responders to survey the coastline and provide aerial perspectives. Crew members from *Preble* volunteered to provide 700 pounds of supplies to the Japanese people from their own deployment rations.

Tortuga transported 93 vehicles, 273 Japan Ground Self-Defense Force troops with equipment from Hokkaido to Honshu, Japan, and its helicopters delivered 13 tons of humanitarian aid cargo 80 miles south of Misawa.

P-3 *Orion* aircraft from Patrol Squadron 4 flying out of Misawa, Japan, are conducting aerial survey missions, ensuring the safety and security of American Sailors and citizens in Japan, which remains a top priority.

U.S. 7th Fleet reported a total of 81 tons of relief supplies had been delivered by U.S. forces, including food and milk, bottled water, clothing, medical supplies and blankets March 18.

President Barack Obama expressed his concern and gave his condolences to the Japanese people in a recent speech.

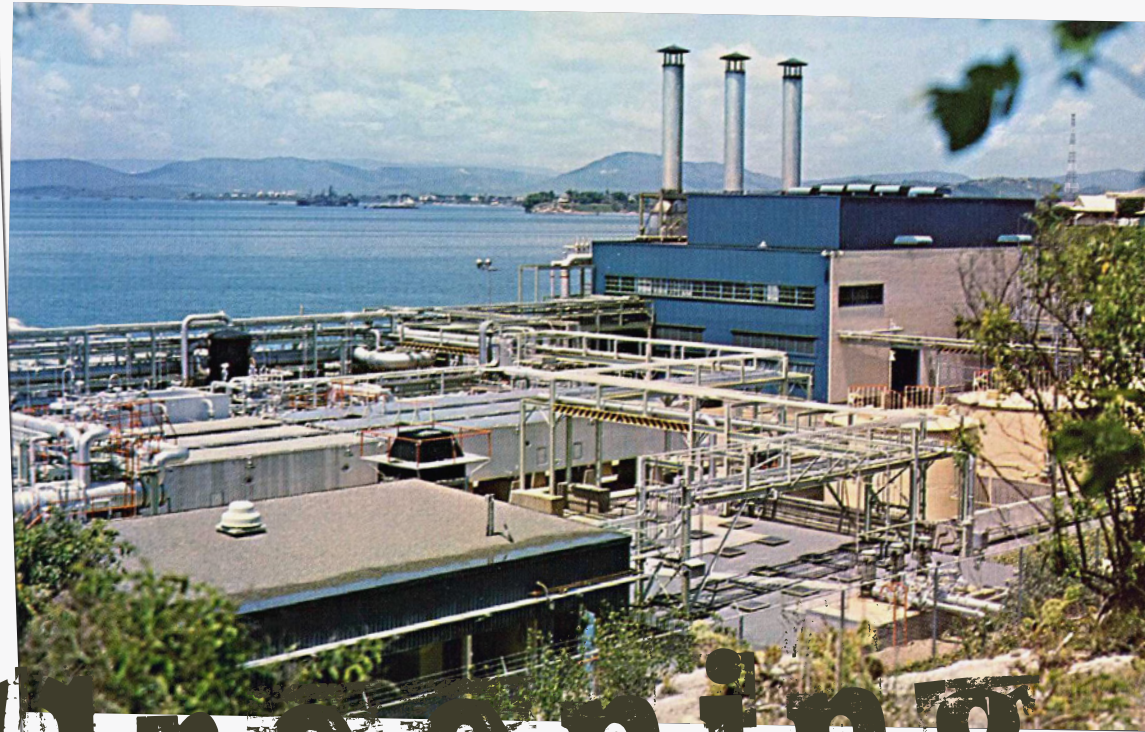
“The Japanese people are not alone in this time of great trial and sorrow. ... Disasters like this remind us of the common humanity we share,” said Obama. “In the coming days we will continue to do everything we can to ensure the safety of American citizens. ... And will stand with the people of Japan as they contain this crisis, recover from this hardship and rebuild their great nation.” **AH**

Story compiled by MC3(SW) Mikelle Smith, Defense Media Activity-Navy, Washington, D.C.

Earthquake Details



Capt. Jim Morgan (center), commander of Destroyer Squadron 7, coordinates search and rescue efforts with Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force Capt. Iwasaki, commander of Escort Flotilla 1, aboard USS *Ronald Reagan* (CVN 76) during Operation *Tomodachi*.



The Greening of Guantanamo

Story by MC3 Leona Mynes

When you arrive at Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, one of the first sights visitors, new residents, and returning residents see are four 262-ft. tall, three-blade wind turbines atop John Paul Jones Hill, the highest point on the 45-sq. mile base.

The turbines typically produce between 2 to 4 percent of the base's electric energy per day. This saves the Navy from purchasing more than 250,000 gallons of diesel fuel per year. The turbines are the most noticeable symbols of the base's quest to conserve energy.

In 1964, just three years after the U.S. broke diplomatic relations with Cuba, Rear Adm. John D. Bulkeley, commander of Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, watched as a chunk of pipe was cut out of the ground near Cuban territory after Cuba's government claimed the base was stealing its water, even though Cuba had already cut off the base's water supply.

Following that claim, water was carried via barge to the base, while a steam-powered desalinization plant and a power plant were being built and implemented.

In FY10 alone, those water and electricity plants produced more than 3.4 million gallons of water and 350,000 kilowatt hours of electricity per day, supporting more than 6,000 service members, their families and civilian contractors residing aboard Guantanamo Bay. The original desalinization plant has been replaced with an energy-efficient 1.5 million gallons per day reverse osmosis plant and a 580,000 kilowatt hour diesel generating plant.

Because of its need to be self-sufficient to support its residents and its mission, Guantanamo is the most expensive base to power in the Navy's Southeast region.

The base has an Americanesque small town glow nestled in a pristine Caribbean environment, and its human population cost the Navy more than \$36 million in FY10 for electric power alone. To reduce that number and fall in line with federal mandates for energy conservation, Guantanamo is taking steps toward a greener future, using its unforgiving sun and sweeping winds as resources.

Constructed in 2004, the four wind turbines marked the beginning of a new mindset for energy conservation and reduced energy consumption for base residents, facilities and commands.

In 2009, a fleet of hybrid vehicles was introduced to the base, that allows members conducting official business to navigate the base using fewer gallons of gasoline. Low-flow shower heads, installed in housing and in barracks around the base, reduced water flow during showers from 2.5 to 1.5 gallons per minute.

By 2010, a waste oil-to-energy converter (WOTEC) was installed. The system blends used oil from generators and visiting ships with diesel fuel for the generators in the power plant.

In FY11, the Public Works Department (PWD) will install two new fuel-efficient 3.5-megawatt generators to reduce diesel consumption by 408,000 gallons per year. Eventually, all power plant generators will be replaced by newer, fuel-efficient generators.

"In Guantanamo, as you reduce energy consumption, you get more 'bang for your buck' than other bases in this region," said Cmdr. Wendy Halsey, Guantanamo Bay's public works officer. "This is due to our high utility rates that are four times greater than other Southeast region naval installations."

To reduce base energy consumption, PWD began replacing approximately one-third of the 17 miles of lights along the perimeter fence with Cuba with solar-powered light-emitting diode (LED)

lights. Low-wattage LED street lights currently span more than half of the base's main roads as well as snake through base neighborhoods as an alternative to high-wattage halogen street lights.

"We estimate that the solar-powered fence line lights are about 1 percent of the base's total energy use," said Lt. Jonathan Chafauros, Guantanamo Bay's assistant public works officer.

PWD has installed 151 energy-measuring meters on large or high-energy use buildings, allowing consumption information to be recorded electronically and compiled into data sheets and graphs for base officials, who will use the information to set a goal for reduction in energy consumption.

"It's not just a region priority or a Department of the Navy priority," said Halsey. "It's a DoD policy to do all we can to control consumption and promote a culture of conservation."

The culture of conservation rippling through Guantanamo culminated into a proactive approach to new construction projects on base. In April 2011, a military construction (MILCON) project to expand the base fitness center by mid-2013 began. It includes plans to construct and use a 0.4 megawatt solar array that will power the facility. In addition to wind and solar power, PWD is looking at biodiesel fuel as an alternative to high levels of oil consumption on base.

Biodiesel fuel would be part of the base's initiative if it were to become a net-zero base.

"Net-zero means all of your power is created by renewable energy sources. It's considered 'green' energy," said Halsey. "If we were ever to become a net-zero base, we would have to use biodiesel fuel, solar power, and continue to reduce our consumption."

PWD's ultimate goal is to move away from petroleum-based diesel fuel, and wind and solar power have no negative effect on the environment or harmful emissions.

"You're never going to make diesel power cleanly," Halsey said. "As we get away from diesel fuel at our power plant, we get away from harmful emissions."

Although PWD and other base entities can contribute to a culture of conservation on Guantanamo, the most important factor is individual effort.

"All of the projects we're doing are great for this [greening of Guantanamo]," Halsey said, "But ultimately, you have to get the user concerned about how much energy they're using."

To make residents more aware of their energy use, people living in base neighborhoods will receive mock electricity and water bills from the housing office. The mock billing will show residents who pay no utility bills how much they cost the Navy per month.

"When I wake up, I get the kids to school, and I go cut off every light and unplug what can be unplugged and leave," said Chafauros.

"If everyone did that, we could save 2 percent [of energy consumption] just from housing."

Chafauros championed building energy monitor training, teaching one person from each building that seemingly insignificant energy conservation precautions can be taken, such as turning off computer monitors and ensuring the number of refrigerators and coffee makers per person remains low.

"These are small steps, but they are steps forward to a greener future," said Chafauros. "We have to make residents want to conserve. The mock billing is really a must, because when people are paying their bills, they're very conscious of what they consume."

Guantanamo is directed to reduce energy consumption by 3 percent in 2011 from FY10 levels.

"But I think we're going to exceed that," said Halsey. "We have limited natural resources that we should be using in the best way possible. "It's more than a federal mandate — using our resources better is a moral imperative." **AM**

Mynes is assigned to Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

“ALIVE DAY”

Story and photos by MC2(EXW) Todd Frantom

WOUNDED WARRIORS CELEBRATE LIFE



Participants in the 2011 Soldier Ride make their way across the Key Bridge in Key West, Fla. The ride is a program of the Wounded Warrior Project, which provides key rehabilitation opportunities for wounded warriors and raises public awareness for those who have been severely injured during the ongoing conflicts.



Retired HM3 Elmer Dinglasan removes his prosthetic legs in preparation for a bike fitting in Miami, Fla. "Losing my legs has completely changed my life but I don't want to be sitting in a wheelchair feeling sorry for myself. I won't give up."

Adrenaline pumping, muscles aching, attention focused; all of these things run through the bodies and minds of the men and women participating in Florida's 2011 Soldier Ride. For these individuals, all of whom are wounded veterans, this day is symbolic; it's their "alive day," a term used by Soldier Ride participants to describe the moment they almost lost their life.



According to Nick Kraus, co-founder of Wounded Warrior Project's Soldier Ride, this opportunity provides wounded warriors the chance to reclaim their confidence and strength through the exhilaration of cycling, and participation in outreach programs like the dolphin encounter.

"We get them back to doing normal things," Kraus said. "It sounds simple, but being able to do a bike trip like this shows that you can do the things you did before, plus push yourself to strive for more and beyond."

Medically retired Hospital Corpsman 3rd Class Elmer Dinglasan, who is also a wounded warrior, believes his "alive day," is best remembered by speeding down a busy highway on a bicycle or holding on to a dolphin's dorsal fin in the sunny state of Florida. He neither feels sorry for himself, nor lets his double-amputee status keep him down. Thanks to the Soldier Ride, this patriot and

others like him experience what many of us take for granted.

"It's all about the wind in your face," said Dinglasan. "When I was laying in my hospital bed back in 2006, I wanted to be where I am right now."

During the three-day cycling event, participants bond, share stories about injuries, life outside of the hospital and rehabilitation therapy.

"When these guys are riding down the sunny streets with palm trees behind them or along the ocean, for some ... this is special, life is good!" said Kraus.

Kraus was not in the military; however, like many Americans, he is doing his part to give back. Kraus said he strongly believes in organizations like Wounded Warriors that allow injured service members to experience a "normal" life.

"It's all about the wind in your face," said retired, HM3 Elmer Dinglasan. "This is where I wanted to be when I was lying in my hospital bed back in 2006, I wanted to be where I am now."





“It gives me chills to see this courageous ex-corpsman,” said HMC Kevin James McGarry. “I’ve been in Iraq and Afghanistan with the grunts but haven’t seen a lot of trauma; therefore, I know what Dinglasan is doing for the guys and it’s incredibly inspirational to witness.”

Above right—
Elmer Dinglasan is greeted by spectators during the sixth annual Soldier Ride in Key West, Fla. While the event has inspired spectators for years, the experience is now open to everyone, allowing the public the opportunity to ride alongside our warriors as they convey a positive message of recovery.

“I am thrilled to be back, and to me, this is the best way for civilians to see these guys and the sacrifices they have gone through and have made,” said Kraus. “I feel like for many of these combat-wounded veterans, this program offers a way to return to an active lifestyle. Most of these men and women have been physically active throughout their lives and are eager to reclaim an athletic activity.”

Before Dinglasan became a double amputee, he enlisted at the age of 34 – his last year of eligibility. Dinglasan spent his 35th birthday in boot camp.

“The attacks of 9/11 sparked a strong desire to join the military,” said Dinglasan. “During my first trip to Iraq, my life would dramatically change.”

While on a routine convoy in Iraq, an anti-tank mine destroyed the vehicle in which Dinglasan was a passenger; as a result he lost both legs.

“It was funny because, usually, they put the corpsman in the third vehicle; the safer ride,” said Dinglasan. “It’s usually the first or the second vehicle that gets hit, but on this day, it wasn’t the safest for me.”

Dinglasan says that he is “past all the learning,” and all the “scary things” that kept him from moving forward after his injuries.

“Sitting on a bike and cruising the streets with people like me is exactly where I want to be,” said Dinglasan. “Putting the prosthetic on for the first time, and moving on with my life was the biggest step. I know there are



many like me that need the motivation to move forward.”

Dinglasan found the motivation to continue with his life while in a hospital bed.

“I’ll never forget a 50-year-old double amputee walking into my room and how he made me feel,” said Dinglasan “I thought if he can do it, I can, too. I want to be that guy now and give back all I can. That’s why I participate in this ride. I believe when wounded veterans see me walking without a cane, maybe they realize that we are not that different. But most of all, I help them realize that recovery is a slow, but possible process.”

Sailors, like HMC Kevin McGarry, attached to Naval Hospital Key West, also volunteer their time meeting and showing their support for the Soldier Ride.

“It gives me chills to be around these incredible individuals,” said McGarry. “It’s different for me because I have never sustained such injuries; I haven’t been in a situation like that ... these guys ride together experiencing the simple, but rewarding, freedom of cycling.”

The influence these riders have on the public is being felt throughout the United States and continues to reflect the rare opportunity to be inspired by some of America’s bravest men and women.

In April 2010, another Soldier Ride supporter, Vice President Joe Biden, along with Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates and Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki, spoke to Wounded Warrior Project’s Soldier

Ride participants saying they define what America represents.

“Your losses to most Americans are incomprehensible, but what’s even more unfathomable to Americans is your courage,” Biden noted during his speech at the White House. “You have no idea, I expect, what an inspiration you [wounded warriors] are to all Americans.”

Calling the wounded warriors “the heart, soul and spine” of the United States, Biden added that they, “set an example for others to emulate.”

“You not only let us know what we should be, you’re showing us that we can be anything we want to be,” Biden said. “And for that, I thank you on behalf of my children and my grandchildren, and all Americans.”

For the second consecutive year, Florida Ride participants were offered a dolphin encounter at Dolphin Research Center (DRC) located in Marathon, Fla., near Key West. Here, wounded warriors get an opportunity to meet mammals that are thought to have healing powers for humans and spend time with them in water.

“We have a saying here at the DRC: ‘You’re going to have to see a surgeon to remove your smile after experiencing the dolphins,’” said Armando Rodriguez, co-founder and chief operating officer at DRC. “The experience seeps into your heart and won’t soon be removed.”

Rodriguez, a former Marine, left the Vietnam War at the age of 19, after being diagnosed with war fatigue.



“Nothing feels more free than having a 600-pound dolphin dragging you around in the water,” said Dinglasan.

Left—
Elmer Dinglasan spends time in the water with dolphins at the Dolphin Research Center in Marathon, Fla.



“When I got out, by luck, I met dolphins at the Miami Sea Aquarium in 1969,” said Rodriguez. “I was a very angry and confused young man. Dolphins let me see a different light, a different world. I became enamored by the experience with dolphins. The rest is history.”

In 1999, Rodriguez along with six supporters designed a therapeutic experience at DRC. It was built around experiencing the psychological nurturing of a dolphin, and what it could mean to the recovery of service members.

“We want to share a magic space here at DRC for all veterans, and we will continue to do so for years to come,” said Rodriguez.

“Nothing feels more free than having a 600-pound dolphin dragging you around in the water,” said Dinglasan. “Being with the dolphins and doing all I can to get out there and do as many normal things next to wounded warriors is what makes the Soldier Ride the best way to live life - with the wind in your face. Today, I feel alive!”

The Miami to Key West Ride, is one of many available through Soldier Ride and draws attention to the needs of the greatest patriots of this generation. The importance of the Soldier Ride is set in place as a program that provides key rehabilitation opportunities for wounded warriors, raising public awareness and money for those that have been severely injured in a combat environment. For former Sailors such as Dinglasan, the importance is much more deeply focused on helping one of his own get better and enjoying a second chance at life. 🙏

*Frantom is assigned to Defense Media
Activity-Navy, Washington, D.C.*



*To learn more about being a partner with the
Wounded Warrior Project or to become a participant
in Soldier Ride, go to www.soldierride.org.*





“Theresa”

Story and photos by MC2(EXW) Todd Frantom

“She is my special girl,” said Linda Erb, vice president of animal care and training at Dolphin Research Center (DRC) Marathon, Fla. “I have known her for about 40 years, and she is our one and only veteran dolphin here at the center.”

Dolphins have been viewed by Sailors as friends from the sea for centuries, but what gifts do they bring with them? Linda Erb, vice president of animal care and training at the Dolphin Research Center (DRC) Marathon, Fla., says the intelligent mammals not only sense how you feel, they literally see right through you - and no other dolphin does it better than Theresa.



Theresa is called the ‘Godmother’ of all the dolphins by the staff. “She is my special girl,” said Erb. “I have known her for about 40 years, and she is our one and only veteran dolphin here at the center.” “Theresa is the oldest dolphin at DRC. She’s in her mid-fifties,” said Erb. “Her background is really interesting - she is our only military girl. When Milton Santini started this place years ago, this was a collection facility for Navy dolphins. The base down in Key West needed dolphins and Theresa was one of the ones sent down there. She lived there for a while ‘enlisted,’ in the Navy, but she went absent without leave – AWOL, as we like to say - and swam back to DRC,” said Erb. Erb jokingly explains how Santini figured Theresa would rather be in show business instead of continuing in a military career. Santini worked out a release for her from the Navy and brought

Theresa back into the family at DRC, and she’s been there ever since.

In the wild, dolphins live into their mid-twenties on average; but, Erb believes it is DRC’s great medical plan that has prolonged Theresa’s life at the facility, making her, possibly, the oldest known dolphin in captivity.

“Even though Theresa is officially retired from the military, she continues to serve as matriarch for a pod of dolphins,” said Erb. “The lagoon she lives in holds two sets of nursing mothers with babies that are less than two months old. Theresa has taken on the role of mid-wife, an important job in maintaining the vitality of these dolphins as they develop and grow.”

Theresa has a tremendous affect on the other dolphins within the shallow waters of the center; but, her status as the most special dolphin can best be explained by the affect she has on the humans who share their lives with the dolphins.

“Theresa was my teacher, when I first started working here,” said Erb. “You learn the most from the wisest dolphin. Therefore, new employees at DRC are normally matched up with Theresa so they can gain the most experience possible during the training period.

Erb especially treasures her time with Theresa because they share a unique past. They were both pregnant at the same time.

“One day I got in the water with Theresa and she went down and started buzzing my belly using her echo location - she gave me an ‘ultra-sound,’” said Erb. “She knew I was pregnant even before I did.”

Armando Rodriguez, co-founder of DRC, says Theresa, and other dolphins like her, can identify comfort levels in humans.

Struggling with his own anxiety levels after the Vietnam War, Rodriguez was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. In 1999, Rodriguez started a pilot program offering wounded veterans dolphin-assisted therapy. Today, this type of therapy is highly subjective among healthcare critics. But it continues to grow. Rodriguez believes it’s still what you take home with you after an encounter with a dolphin that means the most.

Theresa has left her military career like the wounded veterans whose lives she touches. The dolphins at DRC have adapted to life in captivity and are giving back to humans what may be hard to explain on paper.

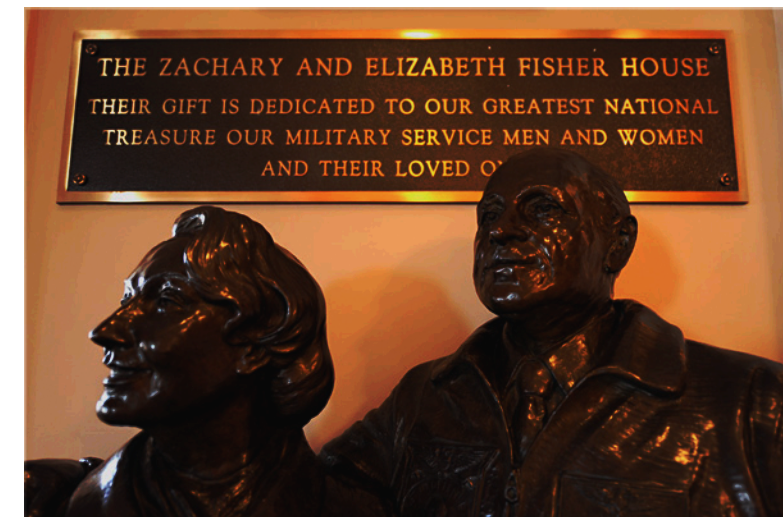
“To have dolphins like Theresa help us understand more about ourselves is a privilege,” said Erb. 🐬

Frantom is assigned to Defense Media Activity-Navy, Washington, D.C.



“Even though Theresa is officially retired from the Navy she continues to serve as matriarch for a pod of dolphins,” said Linda Erb.

Above—
Two-year old dolphins breach the surface under the watchful eye of Theresa, the matriarch for a pod of dolphins.



Fisher House: A Home Away From Home

Story and photos by MC1(SW/AW) Andrew Meyers

Twenty-one years ago, a great idea was conceived – provide temporary lodging facilities at major military medical centers for family members of seriously injured service members to stay in at no cost. Fisher House was the answer. Today, these temporary lodging facilities are equivalent to a four-star bed and breakfast that provides all the comforts of home.

PS1 Gloria Sebastian poses for a picture outside of the Fisher House near National Naval Medical Center where she stayed while receiving treatment for cancer.



Retired JOCS Cynthia and Rino Panzani spend time at the Fisher House while Cynthia Panzani goes through treatment for breast cancer.

Pauline Trost, wife of then-Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Carlisle Trost, presented the idea of building temporary lodging facilities on major military medical centers to Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher who took the idea and made it into a reality.

Typically, the temporary lodging facilities, known as Fisher Houses are 5,000- to 16,000-square-foot homes donated by Fisher House Foundation. Each house is designed to provide eight to 21 suites. All are professionally furnished and decorated in the tone and style of the local region. The houses can accommodate anywhere from 16 to 42 family members. They feature a common kitchen, laundry facilities, a spacious dining room and an inviting living room with a library and toys for children.

When Steve and Deborah Romano's son, Aviation Maintenance Administrationman 2nd Class Steve Romano Jr., was diagnosed with end-stage renal disease (ESRD) they did not know what to do.

"It's amazing after 30 years in the Navy, I didn't know about the Fisher House," said Romano, a retired master chief.

Before finding out about the Fisher House, the Romanos were staying in hotels off base and the Navy Lodge on base at National Naval Medical Center (NNMC), Bethesda, Md.

"The first benefit [of staying in the Fisher House] is we are close by to support our son in the most trying time of his life," said Romano. "For us to be able to be here is worth its weight in gold."

Romano explained that if the Fisher House had not been an option, more than \$10,000 would have been spent in hotel costs. "Originally I didn't know where we were going to stay," said Deborah, "I would have stayed in the car just to be with him. Having this facility makes our time here easier and we can concentrate on his medical situation."

According to Cindy F. Campbell, vice president for community relations and

media affairs for the Fisher House, the facilities were designed for the family to feel at home.

"Home. A home where you can stay, cook dinner and eat in our lovely dining room," said Campbell. "Or, sit in the living room, read a book then go to your room later that night. We really hope that these houses are always full."

With Fisher Houses around the world in constant use, it's necessary to plan for new houses.

"Fisher House relies on donations to keep us operating and building new houses, once we build a new home we give them to the Veterans Administration or the Department of Defense," said Campbell.

"We take great pride [in knowing] that when we donate these houses to the military they are stunning and that they are gorgeous," said Campbell. "You can walk in and feel a sense of comfort right away. We want the houses to be warm and inviting. We want you to be comfort-



Fisher House's amenities provide all the comforts of home, allowing the wounded warriors and their families to concentrate on the healing process.

able so the only focus is on that person in the hospital."

Retired Senior Chief Journalist Cynthia Panzani and her husband Rino have been using the Fisher House facilities worldwide since 1991.

"Initially there was no Fisher House," said Cynthia, who is a breast cancer survivor. "When Rino and I are here [at the Fisher House] it's like we are surrounded by family." Cynthia lives with her husband in LaMaddalena, Italy, and has been undergoing breast cancer treatment for more than 20 years. The couple often has to travel to get her treatments.

During one of the Panzani's visits to the Fisher House, Rino recalled the selfless actions of the faculty's staff and other guests that he says, "made me feel like family."

"Many years ago, Cynthia had surgery in the morning at 7 a.m. that lasted till 10 p.m.," said Rino. "When I could finally see her she was still unconscious, so they told me to go home. I went home after a stress-

ful day, skipping breakfast and lunch. I was just going to have a bowl of soup and go to bed. But, as soon as I got to the Fisher House everyone was waiting on me; the table was set, and they prepared a lobster dinner for me. I almost cried; it was wonderful, I never forgot that."

According to the official Fisher House Foundation website the foundation believes in the promotion of the family environment and the tie between military members. These two things combine together to create a place where people can share experiences and make lifelong friends.

"Cynthia Panzani made me feel like family," said Personnel Specialist 1st Class Gloria Sebastian. Gloria and Cynthia met a few years ago and Cynthia is a friend and mentor to Gloria as she goes through her own treatments for breast cancer.

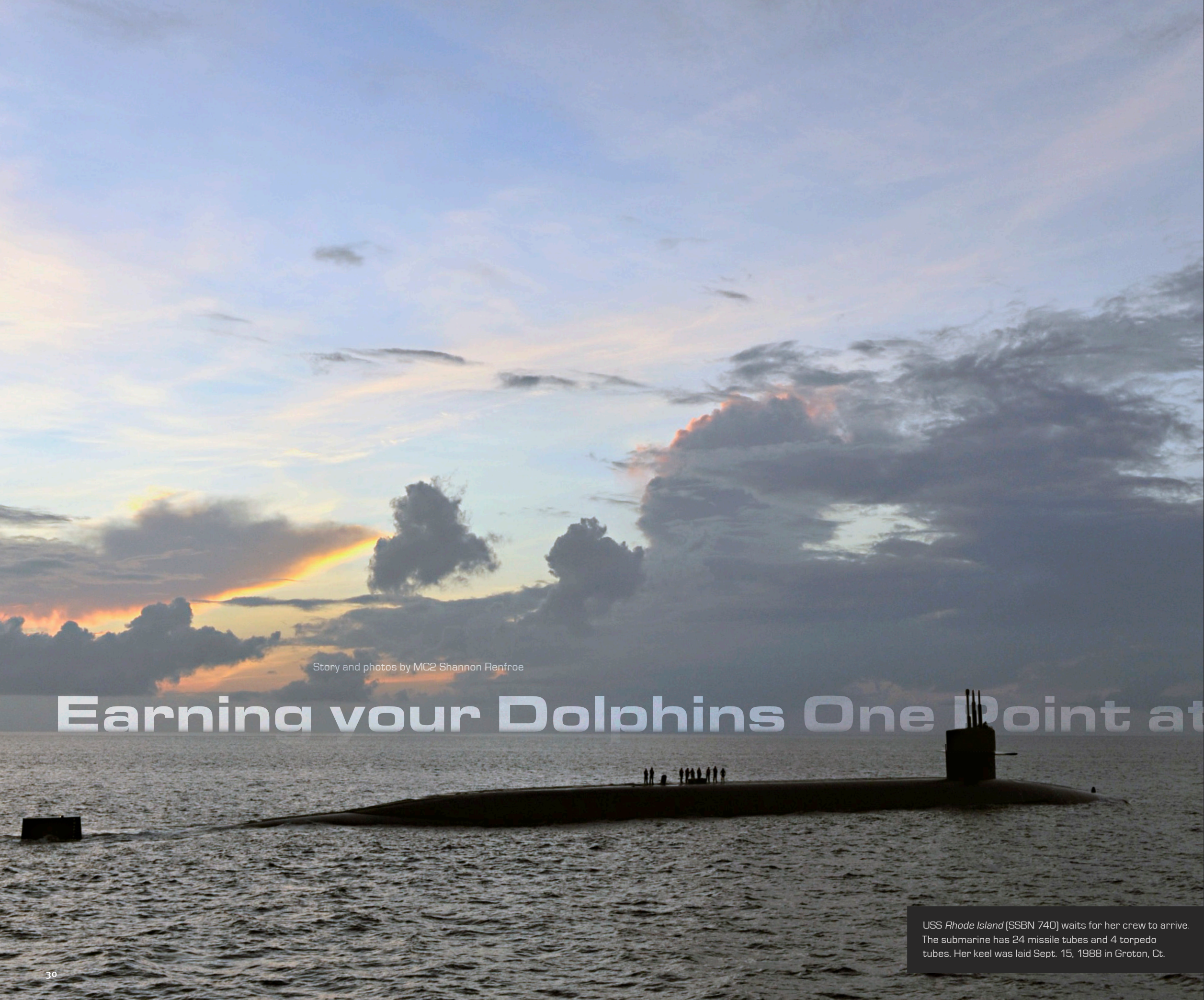
Volunteers help the staff at the facilities create a comfortable environment. These volunteers donate their time to aid service

members and their families with day-to-day tasks.

"I think the concept of the Fisher House is important because it helps support the families and keeps them together," said Christy Hertz, a Fisher House volunteer. "I retired from the Army and felt like it was time to 'pay it back.' I volunteer because it makes me feel good."

Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher's dream lives on in 53 homes across the United States and abroad helping military families in need by providing a quality of life in the places they built. The foundation also helps by administering and sponsoring scholarships for military children, the Hero Miles program and co-sponsors of the Newman's Own Awards program. For more information see the foundation's website www.fisherhouse.org. **AH**

Meyers is assigned to Defense Media Activity-Navy, Washington, D.C.



Story and photos by MC2 Shannon Renfro

Earning your Dolphins One Point at a Time



A DARK SILHOUETTE eerily rises from the still ocean. From afar, it could easily be mistaken as a curious whale until you make out a group of people standing topside. In reality, it's USS *Rhode Island* [SSBN 740], a technologically advanced piece of machinery with its primary role of strategic deterrence. It is the silent defender of the U.S. Navy because of how clandestinely she patrols the deep spaces and dark waters of the world, while the intricacies of life as a submariner unfold beneath the water's surface.

The submarine would be nothing without the dedication of the crew aboard. The crews are submariners and their responsibilities are like none other in the Navy. Once the submarine is submersed, the crew relies solely on each another for survival and seamless operations.

As a member of a sub crew, Sailors must qualify for their Submarine Warfare Insignia or "dolphins." This insignia stands side by side with the Surface Warfare and Aviation Warfare devices, but it wasn't always that way. In 1923, Capt. Ernest J. King, commander, Submarine Division 3, offered proposals of a tailored device for the submarine community to the secretary of the Navy.

USS *Rhode Island* [SSBN 740] waits for her crew to arrive. The submarine has 24 missile tubes and 4 torpedo tubes. Her keel was laid Sept. 15, 1988 in Groton, Ct.

The infant stages of development began with sketches of a shield mounted on the beam of a submarine, with a dolphin forward and aft of the tower created by King himself. The Bureau of Navigation challenged other sources to submit their ideas of what the device should look like. Drafts included submarines married with shields, shark motifs and ancient dolphins. It's thought that dolphins were the animals used because they are the traditional escort of Poseidon, the Greek god of the sea and patron deity of Sailors. Dolphins also symbolize calm seas.

Finally in 1928, Ensign William Crawford Eddy, created the present submarine insignia, which is a bow view of a surfaced submarine, with bow planes rigged for diving, flanked by dolphins in the horizontal position. Theodore Roosevelt Jr., then-acting secretary of the Navy, accepted the final proposal.

To earn the right to wear the pin, there is intense familiarization with all submarine systems, their operations and purpose. Also, it ensures that all personnel receiving their pin know how to operate in high-stress conditions during a damage control mishap.

According to Missile Technician 1st Class William Wadman, "Most people assume that the worst fate for a submarine would be drowning since it's already submerged in the water. But, actually a fire is the most compromising."

With no additional help nearby, such as air support or surface ships and when the crew is enclosed in a relatively small space with ammunition, a fire can be lethal. If something goes wrong deep beneath the surface, a submariner must confidently look to the left or right and know one of those Sailors will be able to save his life.

"So, if we can't respond to a fire and I can't rely on my shipmates to put a fire out or a flooding, then we are all going to die," explained Wadman. "I'll be fighting the fire right next to the chief, right next to the executive officer. We are all down there with CO² extinguishers. When it comes to damage control there is no rank."

This is why elaborate familiarity with damage control equipment is such an integral part of the qualification. Many feel a hands-on approach is the best way to learn.

"When I was qualifying, they give you a little card that has every system on the ship and you have to go through, learn the systems, touch all the valves, touch all the damage control equipment because down here there isn't a damage control party like on surface boats," said Wadman.

For every submarine, there are different stages of qualification. Some commands use five or up to 10 or more. They cover all parts and systems such as damage control procedure, ventilation, first aid, radio and sonar, torpedo launch and watches. The entire qualification process can take up to a year to complete, and progress is maintained through a point system.

There are minimum required numbers of points an unqualified Sailor must collect before the end of a week. There are also morale incentives. If a motivated Sailor is 30 points above the required quota, then the Sailor is considered a "hot runner." A hot runner will be recognized publicly by the submarine's chain of command.

An officer operates a periscope in the control room before diving beneath the surface. A periscope allows a visual of any potential targets or threats above the water. Periscope depth is never revealed for operational security.



If a Sailor completes his qualification during one patrol, which is an average of 60 to 90 days, then he will receive an admiral's letter of recognition and additional points on an advancement exam. Sailors aboard submarines are naturally motivated to finish as soon as possible to become a more integral part of the team where camaraderie reverberates through the hull of the submarine.

"It's basically like a family. Once you get your "fish," you are in the family," said Wadman.

There are many challenges faced when earning a pin. There is a crucial balance in studying for your pin; completing watch standing qualifications; performing division qualifications, sea watch stations, maintenance duties and food service duties in the galley; and trying to sleep. The crew is pushed daily, day in and day out in high stress environments. While out to sea, the crew works anywhere between 12 to 18 hour days and has casualty drills three to four times a week.

"I got [my dolphins] in 1999 and it's still one of the highlights of my career to this day because I really felt like I had earned them," said Chief Missile Technician Kevin Turley.

It can be daunting for some at first when completing the steps reaching qualification.

"When you first get to the boat, it's really intimidating because you have to go up to a chief or senior first class and they are going to test your knowledge on these systems that they own," explained Wadman. "You have to meet their challenge of questions and whatever you don't know, they send you off to look it up - and you come back and get it signed off."

Once everything is signed off on the qualification card, the final board for the qualification becomes the light at the end of the tunnel. It can be the most stressful part of the qualification process. The board is composed of a qualified submarine officer, a chief petty officer and a senior petty officer.

Once the board convenes, various questions are asked, including sketching out submarine systems. The Sailor is thoroughly questioned about his knowledge of the submarine.

After the board concludes, there is a discussion on whether the Sailor will get pushed through or not. Ultimately it's a recommendation that the commanding officer will review and either approve or deny. If approved, the skipper presents the Sailor with his dolphin pin in front of the entire crew.

Before receiving your pin, it's tradition for the Sailor to choose a historic story of a submarine and read it aloud in front of the crew. It brings the crew closer in remembering why what they do is so important and why they earned their pin.

"It still gives me pride any time a junior guy comes in and see them hit the ground running with his qualifications," said Turley. "When I see the look on his face when those dolphins are pinned on, it fills me with pride knowing how I felt when I was in his shoes, and if I had done anything to help him along the way." **AH**

Renfroe is assigned to Defense Media Activity-Navy, Washington, D.C.

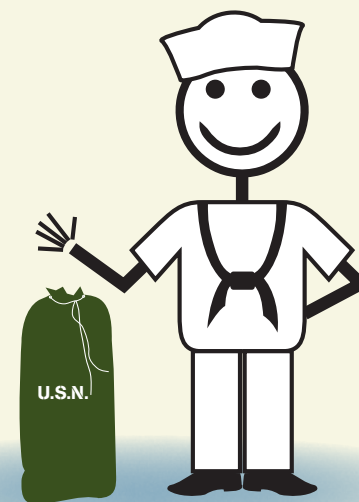
From top—
Submarine crew prepares for breaching exercise.
Crew members brace themselves during surface breach.

Left—
Two dryers and washers are used for the entire 134-man crew aboard USS Rhode Island (SSBN 740).

Helping Children Prepare for Deployment

Story by Elisabeth Madayag

When mom or dad deploys, children may find it difficult to prepare for, and then adjust to the absence of their loved one. It's important to involve children in the preparations for deployment and explain to them exactly what a deployment involves in a way that they will understand. Don't assume they are aware and will understand why their parent is deploying.



Everyone reacts to the news of a deployment differently. Expect a wide range of emotions and be patient with yourself and others. You may feel a variety of feelings, such as: anger, sadness, confusion, nervousness or a strong sense of denial. Some people may also start to withdraw from their spouse or partner to try and make the transition easier. All of these are normal reactions to a deployment. While it might feel like you have no control, there are things you can do to feel better and get ready.

Communicate with your children. Talking openly about deployment and reassuring them they will be cared for while mom or dad is away, can help soothe fears. This may clear up any misunderstandings about the separation your children may have. No matter where you begin, or what you do to prepare, take small steps instead of concentrating on the total length of the deployment, break up the time into manageable chunks. It's also important to keep talking to your child and monitoring how he or she is handling the separation.

Including your children in the preparations for deployment benefits the entire family. Not only do you prepare them for the deploying parent's departure, you give them some control over family decisions, especially when they have little control over a large part of their lives. During meetings with the kids, try to include both discussion and activities. Some suggestions include:

- Encourage younger children to talk with older children who have already been through a deployment.
- Make time for the family member or parent who will be deployed to spend "alone time" with each child in the family before leaving.
- Take lots of pictures or make video recordings of your child and the deploying parent doing everyday activities together.
- Make sure your child understands that he or she will be able to stay in touch with the deployed parent or family member by writing letters and e-mails, talking on the phone, or sending recordings and drawings.
- Come up with a way to countdown the time that the parent or family member will be gone.
- Brainstorm a list of fun activities to go out and do before the departure day of the deploying parent.
- Learning about the deployment cycle with your children so that they are prepared for the next time a deployment period may arise.

Another important element in the process of preparing a child for a deployment, is making sure contact is maintained throughout the length of time that parent will be away.

- Agree on a plan for communicating. Find out how you'll be able to communicate. Talk about whether you'll stay in touch by telephone, e-mail, or letters, and how often or at what times you'll

communicate. Will you be able to send a letter or e-mail each day, or will it be once a week? How soon can you expect to get a response?

- Make a plan for being alone. Family members who are at home while a loved one is serving in the military may be able to deal with anxiety and fear if they make plans to take classes, pick up new hobbies, or spend time doing things they wouldn't normally do. Set some personal goals to work toward during the deployment.
- Talk about your feelings with your partner and encourage him or her to do the same. Share your fears and concerns about the deployment and work together to come up with a plan for handling them.
- Find support for yourself. Many branches of the service offer support in the form of social groups, counseling or advice. Look into what's available for you as a military family member.

Adjusting to changes in regards to family rules when a family member has been deployed can be very difficult. It's important to stay strong for your family and for yourself. Try to:

- Talk about your feelings with a trusted friend, family member, or member of the clergy.
- Maintain healthy eating and sleeping habits.
- Continue communicating with your loved one on a regular basis.

Children look to their caregivers and model their reaction to deployment. Therefore, it is important to project confidence that you will not only survive, but thrive during deployment.

Though it's a joyous time, many families may find themselves facing another adjustment period when a loved one returns from a deployment. As with preparations for departures, the entire family should be involved in preparations for returns. When a loved one comes home, some people may have resurfacing feelings of resentment, impatience or increased anxiety. There will also be an adjustment period while family members begin renegotiating relationships and responsibilities.

Children look forward to having a missing parent back at home. The absent service member looks forward to a joyful reunion and the comforts of home. After a dangerous deployment, families are relieved that the service member is returning home safely. But, mixed in with those feelings of excitement and anticipation are also some perfectly normal worries and resentments.

Reunions can be especially challenging if the deployment was longer or more dangerous than usual, if the deployment created serious money problems for the family, if communicating back home was more difficult than expected, if the deployment is just the latest in a series of deployments, or if there are feelings of jealousy or rumors of infidelity. Without these special strains, reunions are generally much less stressful.

Expect your children to test the rules now that both parents are home. Whenever there's a change in a family, children work to find out whether it might mean any loosening of limits. Talk with your spouse to explain any new rules you've set, so that you can present a united front. Together, apply rules fairly and consistently.

Experienced deployers and their families say that preparation is essential for a successful deployment whether it is your first deployment or your twentieth deployment. The time you spend preparing for deployment pays off down the road. You'll find that you are better able to handle the stress of the separation and take better care of yourself and your family. **AH**

Madayag is assigned to Naval Base Kitsap Fleet and Family Support Center, Silverdale, Wash.

Father and Son: Through the Ranks with the “Seven Cs”

Story by MC3 Shannon Burns | Photo by MC1(SW/AW) Andrew Meyers

Imagine serving almost 60 years in the U.S. Navy climbing through the ranks as a member of a minority. While it might be pretty hard to imagine, that is exactly what retired Master Chief Melvin G. Williams Sr., and his son, retired Vice Adm. Melvin G. Williams Jr. did. Williams Sr. served in the Navy, beginning as a steward in 1951 and retiring as a command master chief in 1978. His son started his career in 1978 as an ensign, after attending the Naval Academy for four years, and retired as a vice admiral in 2010.

Both Williams Sr. and Jr. said they navigated through the ranks to positions of greater responsibility by employing what they call the “Seven Cs” of leadership: Character, Competence, Courage, Commitment, Caring, Communicating and Community. Williams Sr. said that throughout his naval career he has seen many positive changes in the Navy.

“Tremendous changes had taken place while I was in the Navy and for the most part they were very positive,” said Williams Sr. “There were rocky roads coming through the seventies, but the attitude of the Navy was a positive one.

In 1970 he was stationed at the Pentagon as the leader of the Secretary of the Navy and Chief of Naval Operations dining facility. During his time stationed there he had the opportunity to be a direct part of some of the changes by providing enlisted advice to senior Navy leaders and initiating efforts to ensure equal opportunity for all Navy Sailors. In 1974 he proposed merging two existing ratings into one rating. He wanted to merge the commissaryman and the steward ratings to create the mess management specialist rating to provide an opportunity for advancements. He added that although he was established in his rating and had some of the most high profile billets, it was important to shine a light on changes that the Navy needed.

“It wasn’t about me,” he said. “It was about caring for others. It was about sharing and my community. I wanted to make sure that whatever legacy was left behind was something that we had a hand in while we had the opportunity.

Williams Jr. said that watching his father and his friends while he was growing up and seeing their professionalism in the Navy made him want to achieve all that he could out of life.

“I knew they could have done more had there been more opportunities,” said Williams Jr. “That left me with a feeling of personal obligation at the time of the civil rights movement. I wanted to try and move forward and seize any opportunities that were available and laid out by the hard work and dedication of my father and his generation.”

Williams Jr. said it was because of efforts of his father and men in the Navy like him that he was able to have the career that he had in the Navy.

“Individuals like me stand on the shoulders of my father and his generation,” he said. “We were truly blessed because of their professionalism. The fact that they wanted to cause change in a positive way really helped us to have additional opportunities.

Williams Sr. and Jr. recently authored a book in which they talk about their leadership experiences. Both father and son agree that leadership is not only a science but an art as well. They both purport that the leadership skills necessary for an individual to advance in their career can be learned, practiced and refined and that there is no stereotypical typecast mold for leaders.

They also agree that if they - as members of a minority - can rise to leadership roles in the Navy by applying the Seven Cs, then anyone can do it in any profession or career, military or civilian. **AH**

Burns and Meyers are assigned to Defense Media Activity-Navy, Washington, D.C.





Photo by Shoshonia Philip-Florea

USNS *Comfort* (T-AH 20) departs Baltimore, for a five-month *Continuing Promise 2011* deployment. *CP11* is a humanitarian assistance mission to nine countries in Central and South America and the Caribbean.

USNS *Comfort* Deploys in Support of *Continuing Promise 2011*

USNS *Comfort* (T-AH 20) recently departed her homeport of Baltimore in support of the humanitarian civic assistance mission *Continuing Promise 2011* (CP11).

CP11 is a five-month mission to nine countries in Central and South America and the Caribbean, where the U.S. Navy and its partnering nations will work hand-in-hand with host nations and a variety of governmental and non-governmental agencies (NGOs), to train in civil-military operations.

“Humanitarian assistance is a key component in the Navy’s maritime strategy,” said Vice Adm. Adam M. Robinson Jr., U.S. Navy Surgeon General. “Our humanitarian assistance missions bring to others a sense of enrichment and hope that touches individuals, their families, their communities, their nations and in doing so, benefits the global community.”

More than 480 Navy medical personnel will work side-by-side with medical professionals from the nine host nations, five partner nation militaries and more than 30 NGOs to provide medical care to patients both ashore and aboard *Comfort*.

Also deploying with *Comfort* are 71 civil service mariners from Military Sealift Command who operate and navigate the ship,

provide electricity and fresh water to the ship-board hospital, and when necessary, transport patients between ship and shore in small boats.

“My professional Merchant Marine officers and crew are excited to be part of *Continuing Promise 2011*,” said Capt. Randall Rockwood, USNS *Comfort*’s civilian master. “While *Comfort*’s hospital is key to extending medical care and civil assistance to other nations, our role operating the ship is critical to getting the Navy professionals to their destinations.”

Comfort will visit ports in Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Jamaica, Nicaragua and Peru where host nation populations will receive medical and dental care as well as surgical services, public health training, engineering support and veterinary services. Those aboard *Comfort* and partnering nations will have an opportunity to exchange knowledge and information that is integral to building disaster relief preparedness and supporting maritime security in the region.

“The relationships built and sustained with our multinational partners during this mission will enhance our ability to work collectively in support of humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts in the future, as well as other collaborative security activities in the area,” said Capt. David Weiss, USNS *Comfort*’s medi-

cal treatment facility commanding officer. “We are looking forward to fostering these relationships in the next five months.”

During *Comfort*’s previous CP missions in 2007 and 2009, medical personnel aboard the ship treated nearly 200,000 people in 14 countries.

CP11 is a joint effort with NGOs such as Des Moines University, Johns Hopkins, Loving Hugs, Inc., Project Hope, Samaritan’s Feet, World Vets and others.

“Humanitarian assistance missions such as CP11 demonstrate the Navy’s ability to truly be a global force for good while continuing to bolster our relationships with host nations and our NGO partners,” said Robinson. **AH**

Story by Valerie A. Kremer, Bureau of Navy Medicine and Surgery Washington, D.C.

Successful UTR Program Finishes Chapter, Begins Another

Marcia Ellis, the Navy East Coast National Program Manager for United Through Reading (UTR), recently presented Capt. Joseph Clarkson, USS *Harry S. Truman* (CVN 75) commanding officer, with more than 100 UTR letters of appreciation.

The letters were for volunteers who supported the program during *Truman*’s recent deployment.

UTR is a nonprofit organization that unites families facing physical separation by having parents read aloud to their children via DVD. *Truman*’s program was coordinated by Hospital Corpsman 1st Class (FMF) Justin Pearce with assistance from several departmental coordinators.

“It was an honor to present Capt. Clarkson with our after-action folder,” said Ellis. “Petty Officer Pearce did a fantastic job coordinating the program. What impressed me, in addition to the almost 1,000 recordings sent home from *Truman*, was the magnitude of managing 100 volunteers from every department of the ship. We estimated there were almost 3,000 family beneficiaries from the program on the deployment.”

Although the main idea of the program is to make separation easier for families, it offers deployed parents a chance to have an active role in the growth and development of their children from remote locations around the world.

“The benefits of reading aloud are both educationally and emotionally positive for the children,” said Ellis. “Children who are read to, develop vocabulary and comprehension skills faster than other children. They also feel more secure when seeing their parent in a safe

environment. Children have been pictured touching their parent on the TV, talking back to it and even trying to climb into the lap of the deployed parent.”

Program managers and volunteers must rely on feedback from participants and their families to gauge the level of the program’s success. Thanks to surveys conducted via the internet, Pearce and his team were able to see the results of their efforts very quickly.

“I just remember the looks on the children’s faces from the pictures sent back to the ship and the website,” Pearce said. “It’s wonderful that a DVD can have that much impact.”

Survey comments praised the program and many showed the gratitude of the adult family members taking care of the children back home.

“What a fabulous program,” said a Truman family member. “Thank you for providing such a special and meaningful way to stay connected. My daughter can see her daddy every day.”

Pearce said although the ship is no longer deployed, he remains committed to keeping families close through the program and he anticipates a demand for it. The program will still be available in a limited form for those Sailors who are receiving temporary orders, individual augmentees or for other separation such as non-custodial parents. **AH**

Story by MC3 David Cothran, USS Harry S. Truman (CVN 75).

NMCB 74 Completes Water Well in Horn of Africa

Seabee’s assigned to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion (NMCB) 74 Detail Horn of Africa’s (Det. HOA) Water Well Team, recently completed their first well in the village of Jedane, Ethiopia.

The well provides water to more than 3,400 locals and their livestock. Before the well was completed, Jedane residents were walking more than 2,000 yards to draw their water from a 15-foot hole in the ground.

Detachment Water Well arrived in Ethiopia in mid-December 2010, and spent the first month planning and preparing for the mission ahead. When the drilling began, the crew divided into three five-man tours (pronounced towers) and worked around the clock for a total of 19 days. Chief Construction Mechanic Tim Taylor, assistant officer-in-charge, said to strike water they had to drill through dirt, clay and some very tough layers of granite to reach a total depth of 302 feet.



EO2 Kevin Clayton, left, and EO1 Dennis Hill, Seabees assigned to the Horn of Africa detachment of Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74, test the pump on a recently completed well in the village of Jedane, Ethiopia.

Taylor modified two water pumps allowing them to work in unison to generate enough power to keep the mud flowing and the tours drilling.

“The bore hole was drilled once with a 9 7/8-inch bit and was then reamed with a 12 1/4-inch bit to 260 feet. During our second pass with the 12 1/4-inch bit, the mud pump gave way at 238 feet,” said Taylor.

After testing of hydrogen and chloroform levels revealed that the water was suitable for human consumption, the team placed the well housing unit and concrete pad, which contained a water trough for the animals.

District Water Manager Abdi Malik, said he was so impressed with the well, he is considering drafting plans to install an electric pump in the near future. **AH**

Story by HM1 Michael Smaltz, Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 74, Jedane, Ethiopia.

USS *Bulkeley* Frees Ship and Crew from Pirates

A recent request for assistance from a Japanese-owned merchant vessel in the Somali Basin led to Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) warship USS *Bulkeley* (DDG 84) securing the release of the vessel and its 24 crew members from four suspected pirates.

When the oil tanker MV *Guanabara* reported it was under attack 328 nautical miles

south east of Duqm, Oman, *Bulkeley*, assigned to CMF’s counter-piracy mission Combined Task Force (CTF) 151 was directed to intercept *Guanabara*, supported by the Turkish warship TCG *Giresun* of NATO’s counter-piracy Task Force 508.

Following confirmation from *Guanabara*’s master that the suspected pirates were aboard and his crew had taken refuge in the ship’s ‘citadel,’ *Bulkeley*’s specialist boarding team, supported overhead by its embarked SH-60 helicopter, secured the Bahamian-flagged vessel and detained four men.

There was no exchange of fire at any time during the operation to release *Guanabara*.

CMF’s counter-piracy commander, Commodore Abdul Alheem said, “The ships and aircraft under my command have today scored a real and immediate victory through the disruption of a suspected act of piracy and the detention of individuals believed to be engaging in piracy.

“Through our mutual cooperation and shared coordination, CTF 151 and our partner organizations has prevented the kidnapping of legitimate mariners who sought only to go peacefully about their business. Today, there will be a merchant ship sailing freely that would not be doing so were it not for the efforts of CTF-151.” **AH**

Story courtesy of Combined Maritime Forces, Manama, Bahrain.



The Forgotten War

In early 1950, the United States made its first commitment to form a peace treaty with Japan that would guarantee long-term U.S. military bases. Some observers believed that the Japanese treaty led Joseph Stalin, the first general secretary of the communist party of the Soviet Union's central committee, to approve a plan to invade U.S.-supported South Korea on June 25, 1950.

Sometimes referred to as “the young Cold War,” the Korean War was the turning point during the middle of the Cold War for a huge shift of events in American military involvement; everything suddenly turned hot, bloody and expensive. Within a few days, North Korea's invasion of South Korea brought about a United Nations (U.N.) “police action” against the aggressors. That immediately produced heavy military and naval involvement by the United States.

The U.S. Navy maintained a small fleet in the Western Pacific, with ships based in the Philippines and Japan. By 1950, this force had been reduced to one aircraft carrier and two cruisers, plus a number of destroyers and other ships. They maintained a sporadic presence in the troubled waters between mainland China and Taiwan, and “showed the flag” in ports throughout the Western Pacific, including those in South Korea.

A speech by then-Secretary of State Dean Acheson famously omitted the Republic of Korea from U.S. defensive interests. A few months later, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea leader, Kim Il-Sung, shopped around a plan to reunify Korea by force, obtaining the con-

sent of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic and China for what then looked like a quick and easy conquest.

Throughout the summer of 1950, the United States and other U.N. members scrambled to contain North Korea's fast-moving army. They assembled the forces necessary to defeat it and simultaneously began to respond to what was seen as a global military challenge from the communist world.

Though America's armed forces had suffered from several years of punishing fiscal constraints, the end of World War II, just five years earlier, had left a vast potential for recovery. U.S. material reserves held large quantities of relatively modern ships, aircraft, military equipment and production capacity that could be reactivated in a fraction of the time necessary to build them anew. More importantly, the organized Reserve forces included tens of thousands of trained people, whose World War II experiences remained reasonably fresh and relevant.

In mid-September 1950, a daring amphibious invasion by U.S. Marines at Inchon fractured the North Korean war machine. In the following two months U.N. armies pushed swiftly through North Korea. But with victory seemingly in sight, China intervened openly, and the Soviet Union not-so-openly, on the side of their defeated fellow communist neighbor. The U.N. was thrown back midway into South Korea. Early in 1951, the Chinese army was contained and forced to retreat.

After a month and a half of fruitlessly hurling itself against the Pusan Perimeter, a 140-mile area on the southeastern tip of the Korean Peninsula, the weakened North Korean army was suddenly confronted with a grave threat to its rear. U.S. Marines had landed at the western port city of Inchon, near Seoul, and were poised to move inland to retake the capital and decisively cut North Korean supply lines.

This daring amphibious operation was conceived by General of the Army Douglas MacArthur. Inchon was a tactically challenging amphibious target, with long approaches through shallow channels, poor beaches and a tidal range that restricted landing operations to a few hours a day. It took all of MacArthur's unparalleled powers of persuasion to sell his concept to doubting Army, Navy and Marine Corps commanders.

By April 1951, President Harry Truman, replaced MacArthur with General Matthew B. Ridgway. Riding out the resulting political tempest, the government adhered to a “limited war” policy, containing the Korean conflict and thereby freeing resources for a rapid defense buildup in other strategic parts of the globe.

At sea, the navies sharpened the focus of their air and gunfire efforts. With a battleship, three or four big carriers, cruisers and many destroyers on station, the U.S. Navy undertook long campaigns to deconstruct North Korea's eastern railway system and other elements of its transportation and industrial infrastructure. British and smaller U.S. carriers, plus gunfire ships, worked in the Yellow Sea. Minesweepers maintained firing channels for the gunnery ships, and small combatants of many nations enforced a rigorous blockade of the North Korean coast.

By the middle of 1951, the front lines had stabilized near where the war started 12 months earlier. Negotiations began amid hopes of an early truce. But this took two more years, during which time opposing forces fought on. The U.S. Navy provided extensive air and gunfire support, a constant amphibious threat, relentless minesweeping and a large logistics effort.

Finally in July 1953, with the blunting of a final communist offensive, negotiations concluded and fighting ended. But the Cold War, considerably warmed up by the Korean experience, would maintain its costly existence for nearly four more decades. **AH**

Story by MC3 Mikelle D. Smith, Defense Media Activity-Navy, Washington, D.C.

Kingsville Sailor returns from 15-month IA

Story by Jon Gagne, photo by Fifi Kieschnick

Electronics Technician 2nd Class John Fuller recently returned home from a 15-month Individual Augmentee (IA) assignment to Iraq. Fuller's arrival at Corpus Christi International Airport included a hero's welcome led by the South Texas Chapter of the Patriot Guard motorcycle club, as well as friends, family members and shipmates.

"I knew there was going to be a welcoming party at the airport to meet me," Fuller said, "but I wasn't expecting the Patriot Guard or television and newspaper cameras there as well. I really appreciate the effort by everyone involved in that. I can't begin to explain how touched I was by the welcome home ceremony," Fuller said.

For the past 12 months, Fuller had been assigned to the U.S. Army's 5th Battalion, 5th Air Defense Artillery Unit (B-5-5) based out of Fort Lewis, Wash., deployed at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Fuller's unit provided base defense against indirect fire attacks on the base from mortars and rockets.

"I served in various elements of our mission, from watch stander to chief of the guard," Fuller said. "As a watch stander, I provided physical security for the C-RAM gun mounts and their enclosed perimeter fences. As chief of the guard, I served in a supervisory position over the watch standers to include creating watch bills, scheduling training, and mustering and supervising the 10 Sailor watch sections at turnover."

Fuller also served six months on the Joint Base Balad All-Service Honor Guard. In his free time, he completed several online college courses, and read a number of books off the Navy's reading list. He also began running, competed in a number of 5K and 10K runs, and entered and completed the Marine Corps Marathon.

Luckily for Fuller, a native of Austin, Texas, he was able to take a short break from his assignment last May and come home for a week of leave. While he was here, his wife Drennan gave birth to their first child, daughter Rafaela.

"Being able to coordinate my leave to be here for Rafaela's birth, was just awesome," Fuller said.

After he went back to Iraq, Fuller had to make some adjustments to his schedule to include communicating with his wife, daughter and family members.



"Drennan and I were able to stay in contact through video chat over the Internet," Fuller explained. "A number of places around Balad had Wi-Fi capabilities, and I took advantage of that, too, using my laptop to talk back and forth. We also had phone cards and phones available at the USO and our office spaces that I could use to talk with Drennan and the rest of my family."

Fuller's departmental chain of command at NAS Kingsville also stayed in close contact with Fuller during his stint in-country.

"My department, and specifically ground electronics, communicated with me on a regular basis," Fuller said. "When I first left in August 2009, they checked up on me periodically to see how my training was going. Then, just before I came home on leave, they helped me set up a few major items for my Seaman-to-Admiral (STA) 21 program package, including documenting an official physical readiness test and official officer interview boards."

Fuller added that prior to his departure from Iraq in late December, his division assisted him in setting up a week-long TAD assignment to Dam Neck, Va., for special duty screening. With the help of his department and division, Fuller said, he was able to maintain his requirements for advancement and professional growth, and know that his command was looking out for his family while he was deployed.

"My command was a great help and a tremendous resource during my IA tour," Fuller stated. "I don't believe I will ever be able to find a way to properly thank my shipmates for this."

Now, being back home with his family and his 8-month-old daughter, Fuller says he is feeling pretty good about his IA tour, and he's happy to be back at work in more familiar surroundings.

"Being home is fantastic," Fuller stated. "I can't believe I was gone for so long, but I truly appreciate everything my family is blessed with. My wife and I are adjusting to my return and re-integration into 'her' house, and my daughter is getting used to the idea of me being her daddy. As for the shipmates I am returning to, there are many new faces around the shop and I look forward to getting to know and work with them all." **AH**

Gagne and Kieschnick are assigned to NAS Kingsville, Texas.

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